



San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

MEDIA RELEASE

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SAME-SEX DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POSTERS DEPLOYED

Designed to Encourage Crime Reporting, Provide Victim Assistance

San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn today announced that posters are being placed at approximately 20 local bus shelters to enhance the protection of victims of same-sex domestic violence. The posters display the local telephone number of The Center (619-260-6380), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing help and assistance for victims of same-sex domestic violence and other related services. The posters also display the San Diego City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit website (www.sandiegodvunit.org) for 24 hour information and guidance.

The posters were funded by a grant awarded to the City Attorney's Office from the Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning. The posters serve the ongoing effort by the City Attorney to protect victims of same-sex domestic violence as part of an overall strategy to intervene promptly and effectively in such crimes regardless of the sex of victim and assailant. Recently (August 20, 1999), a Superior Court jury returned guilty verdicts on two counts of relationship violence and one count of assault with a deadly weapon in a case prosecuted by the City Attorney's Office involving an assailant and victim of the same sex. This case --*People v. Phranc Von Vlierbergen* -- was the first same-sex domestic violence prosecution leading to a jury conviction for the City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit. These verdicts demonstrate that domestic or relationship violence is not confined to those of the opposite sex, and that both the law and prosecutorial resources can be applied to address such situations.

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Gwinn emphasized that the very nature of domestic violence -- whether between the same or opposite sexes -- is such that it is often hidden in plain sight. Domestic violence occurs in the home or under other circumstances where detection, reporting and early intervention are easily frustrated. Thus, all available means must be exploited to convey the message that help is available and how to find it.

A list of all the anticipated locations where the posters are to be displayed accompanies this release.

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